

# "THE BATTLE FOR SURVIVAL"

## The First Book of Maccabees

<b>Who wrote The First Book of Maccabees?</b>	The exact identity of the author is unknown. However, every indication is that The First Book of Maccabees was written by a Palestinian Jew.
<b>How did The First Book of Maccabees get its name and/or what does that name mean?</b>	The word Maccabees (which means "hammer") is the nickname given to Judas, the third son of the priest Mattathias and first leader of the revolt against the Seleucid King. In a broader sense, the term came to be applied to all of Judas' brothers as well as anyone else that took part and supported the revolt.
<b>When did these events take place?</b>	The First Book of Maccabees covers a time period of approximately 40 years from 175 and 135 B.C.
<b>For more about The First Book of Maccabees:</b>	See page 468 in the <u><a href="#">Fireside Catholic Youth Bible</a></u> .

It is not difficult to find a history of World War II on any library shelf. Do a search on "WWII" on the internet and watch what comes up. Even cable television still recounts the great stories of the defeat of Hitler and what he stood for - over a half of a century later. When human consequences of a battle are so important and victory over evil is critical to survival, mankind has always made every effort to record the battle and the victory for history.

The writer of The First Book of Maccabees does exactly that. His purpose in writing this story was to record the salvation of Israel which God worked through the battles of the family of Mattathias. Unlike the Book of Judith and The Book of Esther, this book is not just a story. It is a history that was written to ensure the legacy of those that made it. The First Book of Maccabees recounts (in battle after battle) how God blessed the Israelites as they revolted against and survived the evil of the Seleucid Kings.

Winning this battle wasn't easy. In fact, it looked for a time like all of Israel might be destroyed, not only by the enemy from the outside, but by itself. In the beginning of The First Book of Maccabees, you'll learn how many Jews turned their back on God by practicing pagan worship with the people who were surrounding them. This Hellenization (turning toward western pagan ways) of the Jewish community was as much of the reason for the ultimate revolt as was any conquest or defeat by an enemy.

**Interesting Fact:** The feast of Hanukkah celebrates the rededication of the Second Temple during the Maccabean revolt

**Bonus Point:** Whose army included a brigade of 500 elephants purchased from India?